

Message Text

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15

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 090837Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8018

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGUI 2371

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CT

SUBJECT: BOKASSA'S FUTURE

REF: BANGUI 2342

1. IN AN EXTENDED TOU D'HORIZON WHICH I HAD DECEMBER 7 WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR PICQUET, WE DISCUSSED THE FUTURE OF THE PRESENT REGIME IN THE LIGHT OF THE PROCLAMATION OF THE EMPIRE. HE SHARES MOST OF THE CONCERNS REPORTED REFTEL AND IS LOOKING TO THE FUTURE WITH SOME CONCERN GIVEN FRANCE'S CLOSE IDENTIFICATION WITH THE BOKASSA REGIME. HE IS UNWILLING TO PREDICT THE REGIME'S LONGEVITY BUT I CAME AWAY WITH THE STRONG IMPRESSION THAT HE INTENDS TO URGE PARIS TO ADOPT A SOMEWHAT LOWER PROFILE VIS A VIS BOKASSA.

2. WHAT WAS OF MORE SIGNIFICANCE WAS PICQUET'S REPORT OF A CONVERSATION HE HAD HAD THE NIGHT BEFORE WITH FOUR RESIDENT AFRICAN AMBASSADORS FROM THE IVORY COAST, SENEGAL, CAMEROON AND GABON. ACCORDING TO PICQUET THE AMBASSADORS WERE UNANIMOUSLY OF THE VIEW THAT BOKASSA'S DAYS WERE NOW NUMBERED AND THAT ASSASSINATION WOULD BE THE WAY IN WHICH CHANGE WOULD COME ABOUT. THEY EXPECTED THAT BOKASSA'S FAMILY WOULD ALSO BE ELIMINATED.

3. COMMENT: NEITHER AMBASSADOR PICQUET NOR I HAVE ANY REASON TO SUPPOSE AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT IS IMMINENT. INDEED, THE AMNESTY DECLARED LATER DURING THE DAY OF DECEMBER 7 (SEPTTEL) CONFIDENTIAL

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MAY DECREASE THE SHORT-RUN LIKELIHOOD OF SUCH AN EVENT. THE

AFRICAN AMBASSADORS WERE OBVIOUSLY UPSET BY THE PROCLAMATION
OF THE EMPIRE WHICH THEY SEE AS REFLECTING ADVERSELY ON ALL OF
AFRICA. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE REGIME IT IS HARD TO
SEE HOW CHANGE CAN TAKE PLACE EXCEPT BY VIOLENCE, AND ASSASSINATION
CERTAINLY REMAINS A POSSIBILITY. UNFORTUNATELY, BY ITS VERY NATURE,
IT IS AN EVENT OF WHICH WE ARE NOT LIKELY TO HAVE ADVANCE WARNING.
QUAINTON

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